

Testimony to the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
Edward Mambruno, Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities
January 22, 2015

Good Morning Senator Duff, Representative Janowski and distinguished members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today regarding my reappointment by Senator Fasano and Senator McKinney to the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). It is an honor to be appointed by Senator Fasano to serve on the oldest civil rights agency in the nation dating back to 1943.

My name is Edward Mambruno, I have been a member of this Commission since 2002 and in 2005 was elected to Secretary.

Presently, I am the Ombudsman for the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS), a position I have held since its inception in 2001. The Office of the Ombudsman works on behalf of consumers and their families to address complaints and/or problems accessing services within the department.

My role as ombudsman is strictly as an advocate; however, I work very closely with and when necessary, make recommendations to the Commissioner of DDS regarding systemic changes. I also work very closely with DDS's regional and assistant regional managers.

During my 20 years of tenure in state service, I have contributed to the development and passage of bills protecting, empowering and improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Some of the most rewarding legislation I have been involved with is the Personal Care Assistance Waiver, the Acquired Brain Injury Waiver and the development of a pre-symptomatic symptomatic clinic for Huntington's disease.

It was due to my strong belief that individuals with disabilities could be hired to perform skilled jobs that were assumed to be out of reach for this under-served, under-employed population that led to my appointment to (at that time, named) the President's Committee for Mental Retardation (now named, Presidents Committee for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities). I served as Chairman of the Employment Subcommittee for two terms and had the opportunity to learn from some of the most progressive and knowledgeable minds in the field of intellectual disabilities in the United States.

In addition, I helped implement, in 1996, the Governor's Coalition for Youth with Disabilities Scholarship Fund (GCYD). This Coalition awarded scholarships for higher education to qualified high school seniors with disabilities. The Coalition was made up of volunteers from the public and private sector. To date, as of its last year in 2014, GCYD has awarded more than 270 qualified high school seniors with disabilities scholarships to further their education. I am proud to say, that in total, these scholarships are valued at over \$750,000. I cannot say enough about the assistance that various State agencies, including DDS, and the Community College and University Systems showed each year by their contribution in awarding scholarships to these deserving young scholars.

It is my belief that my past and current experiences bring a unique perspective to this challenging role as a Commissioner for the CHRO. I have always served as an advocate for citizens of the State of Connecticut and trust that my participation on this Commission will allow me to further the mission of the CHRO. This is "to promote the elimination of discrimination through civil and human rights...to establish equal opportunity and justice for persons within the state through advocacy and education." In these times, we must execute diversity because it is essential to reflect our marketplace and have a competitive strategy to successfully implement it.

I am a graduate of the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. I was awarded a graduate fellowship to attend the University of Connecticut and graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Affairs.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have for me at this time.

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